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OR
NATURE'S PRINTING.

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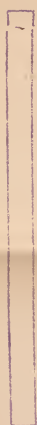
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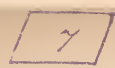
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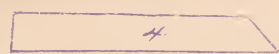
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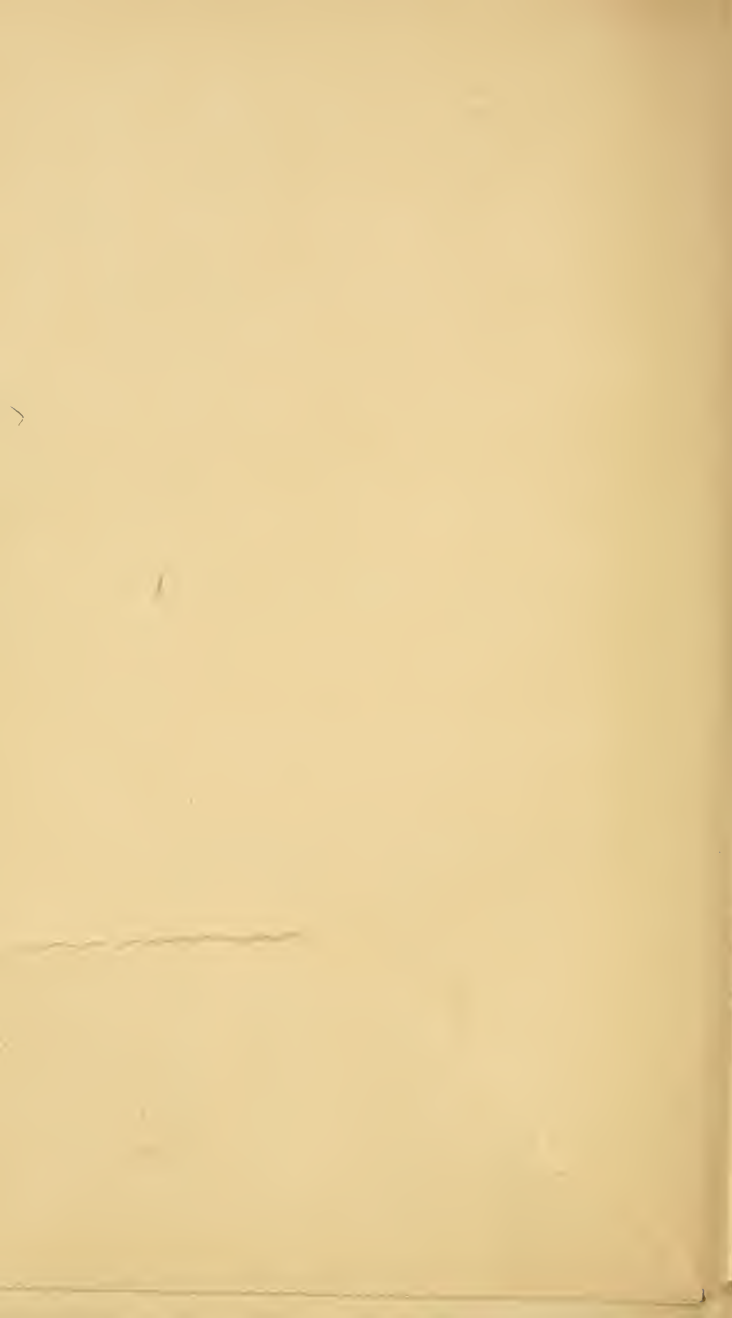


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SPRAY-WORK;

OR,

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Nov 1877
By M. J. McLAUGHLIN.

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TO MY YOUNG PUPILS,

MISS EVA E. MURPHY AND MISS LOU MILLER,

ST. LOUIS, MO.,

IN HOPE THAT THEY MAY REACH THE HIGHEST STANDARD
OF ARTISTIC BEAUTY AND MAKE GLAD THE HEARTS
OF THOSE WHOSE NAMES THEY BEAR, THIS
LITTLE BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED.

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PREFACE.

To the admirers of the beautiful I present these pages, in hope that in every home wherein they may enter they may meet with a welcome and long remembrance throughout all years to come; and if carefully read, you can become your own teacher in the art of making this beautiful misty work—spray, or nature's printing. The writer of this message speaks from long experience in teaching and making this beautiful and fascinating work. Home, the dearest spot on earth, would seem cold and chilly, even if it were furnished with grand and massive workmanship of man, if its walls were not embellished and its windows decorated with charming bits of art and beauty, made by some dear hands of loved ones at the family fireside.

Every lesson learned at home, every act done or left undone, is not to be forgotten by any of us. Therefore we should first of all things endeavor to make home pleasing and attractive. It does not require wealth to do this, for we are aided by nature's rich and free bounty, in simple as well as great things; then let not even the simple things, as the faded garnitures and fallen foliage of the forests, fall to disuse, decay and forgetfulness.

Gather them, because our æsthetic tastes crave the presence of just such simple things as these.

SPRAY-WORK;

OR,

“NATURE'S PRINTING.”

By some this pretty employment is called “Spatter-Work.” The term to me seems perfectly ridiculous, and by no means appropriate. For the ordinary process the tools and necessary materials are very simple. I shall leave them and their use to be explained when the collection of objects, or rather ferns and foliage, has been fully completed. While fern fronds no doubt form the most graceful pictures, leaves of the rose, shamrock, heather, and even those of common grasses are often introduced with charming effect, breaking up any monotony that might result from the exclusive use of ferns. The latter, it is true, are a numerous family, but there still remains a general resemblance between all the branches, and, therefore, a sameness throughout the picture, no matter how beautiful it appears, if ferns alone are used.

While occasionally an active spray-artist can form a picture of fresh leaves or ferns, the general process requires that they be first pressed. Do not gather the specimens until they are perfectly dry, as the least dampness interferes with a successful performance of the work. The best press consists of two spray-boards, large enough to allow quite a margin about the ferns after they are arranged for drying or pressing. Spongy or absorbent paper is next required, and as to which is the best there is a diversity of opinion. Botanical paper, heavy brown paper, and blotting paper are all in use. The last men-

tioned kind seems, however, to be most generally selected; so, on one of the boards spread several sheets of it, and over them carefully lay your collections of ferns and leaves, taking care to arrange each in the shape you wish it to retain for its later use. Then cover them with several other sheets of blotting paper, adjust the remaining board, and distribute weights—no matter what they are, so that the pressure will be even. The use of the boards is to equalize the pressure—a result seldom obtained when ferns are laid between the leaves of an ordinary book, as most of us know from experience. Marble slabs make excellent weights.

At the end of twenty-four hours remove the specimens place them between fresh sheets of paper, and subject them to another day of pressing, when they will be ready for the final work. The foundation material for this process now depends upon what you wish to make. White spray-board, wood, fine white Swiss, heavy white silk, and green satin are all used for special purposes; but if you wish to experiment, or practice, to discover whether you can spray nicely, take a half sheet of white spray-board, and make a bouquet of ferns and grasses.

The following directions will apply to the forming of mottoes, crosses, monuments and columns, the elaborating of any article of wood, or the embellishment of card-cases, portfolios, glove boxes, etc.: Having taken the precaution of spreading a large sheet of brown paper over the table—which must be quite large and of soft wood—cover and enveloping yourself in a large apron with a bib, spread your piece of spray-board on the table, taking care that the board be free from dust; then exhumate the ferns and grasses you have pressed, and lay quite a number of them on the table. By so doing you will have an opportunity to select the prettiest ferns. Those with curly tips form the most graceful picture. Lay a long piece of grass, or rose twig with leaves, on the center of your spray-board, taking care to rest the stems of each leaf upon the first branch, and the third stems upon the second, and the same throughout the picture. If the stems are seen, the effect is bad; you will be obliged

to arrange (and perhaps re-arrange) them until the result suits you, and you must take care and lay them so that some may not be covered by others. Here will be found an opportunity of exercising your taste. But in changing the positions of the more delicate collections, you will have to handle them very gently with your fore-finger and the blade of a small pocket-knife, otherwise you can not form a picture of any kind. You will next need a spray-net. The frame of this spray-net must be of heavy wire, nine inches in length and five in width, turning the ends of the wire to the center lengthwise to form the handle. This frame must be covered with fine wire-net, drawn over and stitched tightly around the edges of the frame. The spray-net can be made at any wire establishment, and if well made will last for years. You will need a cake of genuine India ink and a saucer of soft water; put the saucer in a large wash basin. You also need a piece of whetstone, five and a half inches in length and two in width. Rest the end of the whetstone in the saucer of water, take the cake of India ink in your right hand, and dip the end of the ink in the saucer of water, rubbing gently up and down the whetstone. Of course the ink must be dipped in the water each time it is passed up and down the stone. Here judgment is required, for if the ink is made too black, your shades will not be soft in effect; five minutes' time is sufficient to prepare the ink. And last of all, you will need a spray-brush, which is manufactured expressly for this beautiful misty work, and can be obtained at any store where artists' materials are sold.

You will now be ready to commence the final work. Holding the spray-net by the handle in your left hand, with your right dip the brush in the ink, and then give the brush two spiteful shakes, and pass it gently up and down the spray-net, taking care that the net and brush be perfectly dry before more ink is required. You will have to stand up to perform this part of the work, and out of the draft of doors and windows; for even a little puff of tender breath will not only carry away your leaves, but the very fine black mist that is falling from the net

would be swept away. When you think your picture is dark enough, and as you remember you can not get along without the aid of a knife, so rest your forefinger upon the blade of the knife, and proceed to take up the leaves, commencing with the top ones, taking up every other leaf; have ready several pamphlets or almanacs, and as you remove your leaves place them in the books, for if you let them dry in the open air they will be unfit for use. With this precaution leaves and ferns will serve to work with for months and months, even if you should work with them every day. Now, with your spray-net, brush and ink, go over the picture the second time, until the shade suits your taste. Let the picture dry for a few moments, then with the point of your knife remove remaining leaves a little to the left of you, and again use the brush and ink quite freely; let dry for a few moments, then take up all the leaves, and of all the beautiful sights ever seen, this picture will be the most beautiful. When thoroughly dry, polish the picture by rubbing it over gently with an old soft linen napkin; it is now ready to be framed. A Roman gold frame, with black mat and French plate-glass, is the prettiest frame for these pictures.

If you have been successful in making a bouquet, then you can make a cross. Figure 1 represents a cross pattern, with a beautiful base. For making the cross, take half a sheet of spray-board, being careful that the board be free from dust; place figure 1 in the center of the board. You will now need some fine needles, as the pattern must be flat against the surface, and be secured with needles; you have only to imbed the points in the pattern, first passing them through the spray-board, leaving the needles, therefore, in an upright position. Figure 1 will be marked 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. There will also be five pieces with corresponding numbers. Secure these numbers with needles opposite the numbers on figure 1. Now you will be ready to arrange the fern leaves and foliage around the cross, commencing from under the elbow of the cross, allowing quite a margin about the ferns, and apply the directions given for forming the bouquet. After having the picture dark enough, and the shading of the

leaves finished, let dry for a few moments; then take up all the leaves, and also take up 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; always bear gently on the strip of paper with the point of your knife while taking out the needles, and again use the brush and ink freely, until the shade is quite dark; let dry for a few moments, then take up figure 1, and you will have a beautiful pure white cross, though not finished until you take the three narrow strips of paper, 8, 9 and 10; the strips of paper are to form lines to correspond with the white lines on the base of the cross. When these strips of paper have been secured with needles on the base of the cross, then cover every particle of the picture with pieces of thin brown paper secured with needles, except between the narrow strips; leave exposed, and use the brush and ink until you think the shade corresponds with 5, 6 and 7, and then remove the pieces of brown paper; let dry, and then with the point of your knife—which must be perfectly clean—press down the needle holes, and polish the picture as before mentioned. The cross will now be finished, unless you may desire a wreath or vine around it. This you will have to arrange to suit your taste, but be careful that the stem of the vine or wreath is not seen projecting from any point of the cross or base, and have the shade very delicate. The cross pattern must be transferred to thin blotting paper. Then cut out exactly before using the pattern at all. With care the same pattern will last for years.

When making spray-board mottoes you will require letters for the words. If you understand drawing you can draw letters for any words, otherwise you will have to purchase mottoes, and cut from them the words you may desire. The letters will never wear out; and if you wish to accommodate your friends by giving them letters, you have only to place the letters on thin blotting paper, and use the brush and ink; in this way the letters will be perfect, and easily cut from the paper. The words of any one motto may be used in various ways; for instance, the words “God Bless our Home,” a very handsome motto made by one of my pupils, a young girl of artistic genius,

represented a demi-wreath of ferns, rose and other shapely leaves encircling the word "Home."

When one becomes a good spray artist, fancy heads can be transferred to spray-board, and encircled by dainty wreaths.

In spraying upon wood, which must be white and unpolished, brown tints are the prettiest, as they make your ferns appear as if gathered in autumnal shades of golden brown. To obtain this effect, mix vandyke brown and burnt sienna with your sepia; when the design is finished, the wood must be spread with a thin, even coat of varnish, passing your brush in one direction. Colors are very effective in spray-work, but require some skill, time and patience, besides an assortment of artists' materials. Artists who have never tried the experiment would scarcely imagine what a beautiful effect results from painting a group of flowers, with a background prepared by very fine spray-work.

Green spray-work, or "Nature's printing," may be accomplished with little trouble and expense, and is really very charming. The black, brown and white effects only have been described, but to obtain natural tints would surely delight the experimenter. You will require two tubes of colors, one of Prussian blue and another of chrome yellow, by the mixture of which, on some non-absorbent surface, you will be able to produce all the different shades of green. You will next require a color-pad; if you use different shades, you must have a pad for each. Lay your leaf or fern on a piece of paper, and with the pad press the color all over it, and thoroughly into its fibres. Then arrange the painted fern colored side down, on the Swiss, silk or paper, and place another piece of paper over it, pressing the paper directly over the fern for some time with your fingers. When you think the impression is fixed, remove paper and leaf very carefully, and it is probable that the impression will be quite satisfactory. You may be unsuccessful in the first attempt, for the result depends greatly upon the quantity of color applied. If you use too little, the impression will be faint; if too much, the coloring matter will gush from under the edges,

leaving a heavy, ragged outline. If the latter is imperfect when the rest of the impression is satisfactory, it may be touched up with burnt sienna, which, in addition to perfecting the shape, will impart a lovely tone to the whole leaf, and also to a bouquet of this beautiful work.

If it were convenient, I would gladly place figures in this little book, to represent patterns for making many beautiful and useful articles of white spray-board, ornamented with spray-work—wall-pockets, visiting card pockets, photograph holders, music and paper holders, slipper holders and baskets. The sides of wall-pockets must be thin cardinal red, pink or blue paper. Tie the pocket with ribbon or zephyr, the same color of the side piece; make tassels for the pockets and basket. The basket must be made of thin, tough white spray-board, as it will yield readily to any form you may desire. The writer of this has on hand patterns of one hundred different ornamental and useful articles. Persons who desire patterns or designs can have them sent to any part of the country.

FERN LEAVES AND GRASSES.

Many ladies imagine that much preparation and care are required in the gathering of these mute testimonials of summer and autumn. This is an unfortunate mistake, because it prevents many from enlivening their homes by charming bits of grace and color.

All the world was given to us to be ours, but its best things require to be captured and domesticated before they can be “our own.” We unfortunates, who are crowded into cities, where the sight and stir of a leaf brings a certain satisfaction, love to gather these evidences of nature’s beautiful bounty. We do this partly in memory of summery days, partly because the leaves have matured and fulfilled their mission to the fields, and would fall into disuse, decay and forgetfulness, if we did not collect them; but more especially do we select and prepare the beautiful and graceful foliage of wood and field, because our æsthetic tastes crave their presence while

nature is sleeping and cannot supply us with a sight of her charms. Dwellers in the country have equal need of these hoarded reminders of summers to come, when the white pall of mid-winter, which is spread over the remains of last year's loveliness, shall have passed away.

The writer of this message to the lovers of things simple and beautiful, has only to remind the scoffer at trifling house decorations of the leafage from forests, fronds from rocky ledges, grasses from hillside and meadow, and spathas from borders of streams, which Bryant, Thoreau, Hawthorne, and many others who loved the beautiful—compared with whom we are but insignificant beings—held in sacred reverence. They made friends of them, and have strewn our literature with garlands of immortal verse, all intertwined and made vivid with just such simple things as the faded garniture and fallen foliage of the forests. But we need not call up these great souls to make apology for us; neither need we care very much for those who sneer at the leaf-gatherer, who scrambles over the rocks for a brilliant branch, or runs eagerly after a bright leaf that is scudding before a vicious autumnal wind. When winter comes we have our compensation for all such discouraging sarcasms—a cure for all the wounds which the noble creatures who are superior to the every-day products of nature, can by any possibility inflict upon us—our delight in the rich tints of preserved autumnal trophies, in the summery droop of ferns, and even in the preserved grasses gathered from many a field, both far and near. My own experience taught me to gather ferns early, and if any of you should ever go up into the mountains—for instance, the Catskill Mountains—even in that high country the ferns will be in superb development in the last of July. Take with you quite a number of sheets of blotting paper—paper of any kind, even newspaper, being a luxury in the mountains—gather the finest ferns, lay them between the sheets of blotting paper and press them as before mentioned, but change them to dry paper every day until they are perfectly dry; by this process they will retain their natural tints. When at home, place them in some secure place until near Christmas,

then exhume them, and of all the beautiful preservations ever seen, these will be the greenest and most beautiful.

Fill your large vases and jardinieres with white sand, and plant the stems of the ferns so as to resemble a natural growth. After a day or two of upright position in a warm room they will curl over their tips just as if they were growing; they will be the delight of the winter, retaining their greenness through the whole season. Of course they must be carefully set away on sweeping days, and many a little puff of tender breath from loving lips might have swept over their leaves to carry away from them evidences of a close familiarity with civilization. Next year enough must be gathered for a fresh supply, as the first groups will be rather dusty. Brilliant forest leaves are very beautiful if not pressed too heavily or too carefully; varnish spoils them by taking away their natural texture, and certainly does not add to their brilliancy. Never iron autumn leaves; this also spoils their graces. A few indentations in them are much preferable to flatness. Southern moss may be made into long clinging garlands; into it the stems of brilliant leaves are touched after they have been dipped in mucilage; carefully festoon this beautiful ornament over doors, pictures, and indeed anywhere, and the leaves will cling to it in safety all winter long. It is simply a decorative ornament to place in any apartment. A bouquet basket, filled and draped with moss, is made charming by adorning its top and drooping ends with leaves of various colors. It is a great mistake to omit green and russet leaves from the collection. Gather them and press them carefully in single leaves or in sprays, taking care that the pressure of the latter be as natural and graceful as possible. Sprays or branches are pretty for bouquets, or to place back of engravings. Never arrange them around colored pictures. The effect is mutually bad.

Grasses should be dried and not pressed. If you wish to have grains and grasses in their perfection of growth, gather them just before they have fully ripened, but not before they have fully developed their seed. Cut them of the length required, and if you wish the grains to be

bleached, lay them in the sunshine on the grass, and wet them with clean water several times every day, until they are of the brilliant tint required. The grasses are prettiest in their own verdant tints, as nearly as they can be made to keep them. Do not dip them in solutions of alum, or in anything to make them appear artificial. You cannot improve them any more than you can paint the lily.

The catin of the iris is a pretty ornament in winter, if gathered and dried. The milk-weed, when it is ripe, is exquisite if the pod is burst open so that the silky interior spreads its fibres over the edge of its natural enclosure. One of the prettiest things I ever saw for a lady's room was a set of fine white Swiss curtains with a double ruffle, with center covered by a flat garland of autumnal foliage and secured with tiny insect pins or caught by fine threads.

To make a handsome fire-screen, take a large sheet of white or brown spray-board, arrange a group of fern leaves, or a bouquet of autumnal foliage, ornament with spray-work, place the sheet of spray-board between two plates of glass, have made a wicker-work frame to fit the glass. This is among the most beautiful of home decorations.

I have in this article endeavored to inform those who have not discovered it for themselves, that leaf-gathering for the brightening of the house in winter time requires but a trifling effort, and the nearer the result resembles nature, the nearer it will be to the highest standard of artistic beauty. What is art, but an endeavor to be natural?

A PURCHASING AGENCY.

Mrs. M. J. McLaughlin wishes to announce that she has opened a purchasing agency, and will receive orders from those desiring her to purchase goods. My arrangements will enable me to fill orders, whether for large or small quantities, with dispatch and at reasonable prices. Experience has adapted me for supplying the requirements of plain or refined tastes successfully. By my associations I am apprised at the earliest possible moment of the latest European and American styles.

Dress goods, cloakings, costumes, in infants' wardrobes, laces, millinery, domestics of all kinds, trimmings, publications, stamping patterns and materials, orders for all articles will be punctually attended to and carefully executed.

Purchases can be made more satisfactorily with ready funds than upon terms or credit, therefore the full amount must be sent with the order. In making remittances, if possible, send by draft or post-office order. Do not risk money in a letter without registering it. Information as to current prices, etc., sent upon receipt of stamp for return letter. Parties who anticipate giving an order for a costume, a bonnet, or goods of any kind, and who write in advance for information as to prices, should give an idea as to the qualities desired, by stating the expense to which they wish their purchases limited. Those desiring a collection of samples must inclose fifty cents as payment for the time taken to procure them.

Retail dealers who do not make regular trips to St. Louis market, can be supplied with novelties and standards on favorable terms, as I have facilities for selecting from the stocks of leading importing and jobbing houses at trade discounts.

I have had manufactured by Williamson, Stewart & Co., No. 311 North Second street, St. Louis, Mo.,—one of the largest wholesale paper and stationery establishments in the West—three different grades of spray-boards, expressly for my own use, and for the use of all who may

desire to engage in this new and profitable work, "spray-work." The necessary materials for this work have already been mentioned, and are all inexpensive. Parties writing for information can have any of the articles mentioned sent by mail or express to any State or Territory. Parties desiring patterns for designs can have sent to any address twelve different designs cut in full size, with full instructions how to put together, on receipt of one dollar and twenty-five cents.

Communications may be addressed to **Mrs. Mary Jane McLaughlin**, in care of Williamson, Stewart & Co., 311 North Second street, St. Louis, Mo.

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